

When possessive suffixes are missing: non-agreeing possessees in Udmurt predicative possessive (?) constructions

Erika Asztalos

Hungarian Research Institute for Linguistics &
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

Indigenous languages of Russia in contact with Russian

13.02.2021

Vinogradov Institute for Russian Language (RAS) & Institute of
Linguistics (RAS), Moscow

Predicative possession in Udmurt

→ *Locational Possessive* in Stassen's (2009) typology; genitive-marked subtype

- possessor: Gen; can be absent
- possessee:
 - agrees in person and number with the possessor
 - syntactic function: subject
- existential verb

(1) **(Mynam)** **kyk** **pinal-e** **vań.** (Winkler 2001: 71)
 1SG.GEN two child-1SG be.PRS
 'I have two children.'

- ! however, with overt possessors, lack of possessive agreement also occurs:

(2) **Saša-len** **nylpi** **vań** **no** **kyšno.** (SMC)
 Sasha-GEN child be.PRS and wife
 'Sasha has a child and a wife.'

Questions

- How frequent is lack of possessive agreement?
- What kind of lexico-semantic factors allow it?
- Is it induced by the influence of Russian?

Claims

→ lack of possessive agreement: two distinct phenomena in Udmurt:

1. internally (i.e., **semantically**) motivated:
 - a. possessor = ***experiencer***
 - b. possessor = "***locational(-like)***" element
2. lack of agreement in prototypical possessive constructions: more recent phenomenon, induced by the **influence of Russian**

❖ meant to be a pilot study

Outline

- Background
 - The Udmurt language
 - Prototypical possession
 - Lexico-semantic categorization of possessee and possessors in Udmurt
 - Previous findings on lack of poss. agreement in Udmurt
 - Predicative possessive constructions in Russian
 - Predicative possessive constructions in Komi-Permyak
- Potential factors conditioning lack of poss. agreement
- Data
- Results
 - Semantically motivated types of lack of agreement
 - Lack of agreement induced by Russian influence
- Conclusion

The Udmurt language

- Uralic > Finno-Ugric > Permic
- agglutinative, SOV (> SVO)
- population: 552 299, speakers: 340 338 (Census of the Russian Federation, 2010)
- Udmurt Republic (minority language) + Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Mari El, Perm Krai, Kirov Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast etc.
- bi-, trilingualism, strong Russian influence



(ibtpartners.org)

Prototypical possession

- possessee: **concrete item**
- possessor:
 - **human**
 - has the right to make use of the possessee
- spatial proximity
- possession has no conceivable temporal limit

(Heine 1997: 39)

Lexico-semantic categorization of possesseees in Udmurt (Edygarova 2010)

- morphonological distinction:
 - inalienables: SG poss. suffixes in **-y-**
 - alienables: SG poss. suffixes in **-(j)e-**

1. **inalienable** possesseees:

- certain body parts: *jyr-y* ‘my head’
- certain psychological concepts: *lul-yd* ‘your soul’
- part-whole relationship: *vyl-yz* ‘its top’
- certain kinship terms: *nyl-y* ‘my daughter’

→ + ***natural/inherent possession***

Lexico-semantic categorization of **possesseees** in Udmurt (cont.) (Edygarova 2010)

2. alienable possesseees

2.1. *high ability of being possessed* (obligatory possessor):

- “semi-alienable”: *jyrśi-je* ‘my hair’
- certain kinship terms: *anaj-ed* ‘your mother’
- psychological, mental states, processes: *šud-ez* ‘his/her happiness’
- concrete objects, parts of objects: *ukno-je* ‘my window’
- abstract notions: *puštros-ez* ‘its content’

→ + ***natural/inherent possession***

Lexico-semantic categorization of **possesseees** in Udmurt (cont.) (Edygarova 2010)

- **alienable** possesseees (cont.)

2.2. *average ability of being possessed:*

- objects related to everyday-life, domestic animals:
korka-je ‘my house’
- artefacts: *sured-ed* ‘your drawing’
- persons having social/legal control over the
possessee: *el’kunlen prezident-ez* ‘the president of
the republic’

→ + ***prototypical possession***

Lexico-semantic categorization of **possesseees** in Udmurt (cont.) (Edygarova 2010)

- **alienable** possesseees (cont.)

2.3. *low ability of being possessed:*

- natural and geographical phenomena, beasts: *šundy* 'sun', *kion* 'wolf'
- abstract social notions: *festival'* 'festival', *oš* 'war'
- social institutions: *kar* 'city'
- persons not having an obligatory referent: *dyšetis'* 'teacher', *kalyk* 'people'

→ + ***associative possession*** (based on physical contact, emotional attitude, association etc.)

Lexico-semantic categorization of **possessors** in Udmurt (Edygarova 2010)

- ability of being possessors – hierarchy:
 1. deictic/personal pronouns (1, 2 > 3)
 2. human
 3. animate
 4. inanimate
 - (...)
- based on pronominality, humanness, animacy

Previous findings on the lack of poss. agreement in Udmurt

- Edygarova (2010: 35):
 - rare phenomenon
 - mainly in “egocentric statements”:

(2) ***Noš mil'am syće opyt vań.*** (ibid.)
but 1PL.GEN such experience be.PRS
‘But we do have such an experience.’

Predicative possessive constructions in Russian

→ *Locational Possessive* in Stassen's (2009) typology

- possessor: Adess
- possessee:
 - **no agreement** with the possessor
 - syntactic function: subject
- existential verb

(3) ***U nas jest' popugaj.***

ADE 1PL.GEN be.PRS parrot

'We have a parrot.'

Predicative possessive constructions in Komi-Permyak

- one of the closest relatives of Udmurt (Permic)
- in pred. poss. constructions, the possessee is usually (however, not always) unmarked ← the lack of agreement is probably due to Russian influence (cf. F. Gulyás 2020):

(4) ***Nasta-lön** **em** **ńebög.***

Nastya-GEN be.PRS.SG book

‘Nastya has a book.’ (ibid.)

Potential factors conditioning the lack of possessive agreement

- type of possession (*inherent/prototypical/associative*)
- possessor:
 - *animacy* (and *pronominality*)
 - *semantic role*
- possessee:
 - *alienability*
 - *ability of being possessed* (high/average/low)
 - lexical properties: Russian/English *loanword*?
- information structure

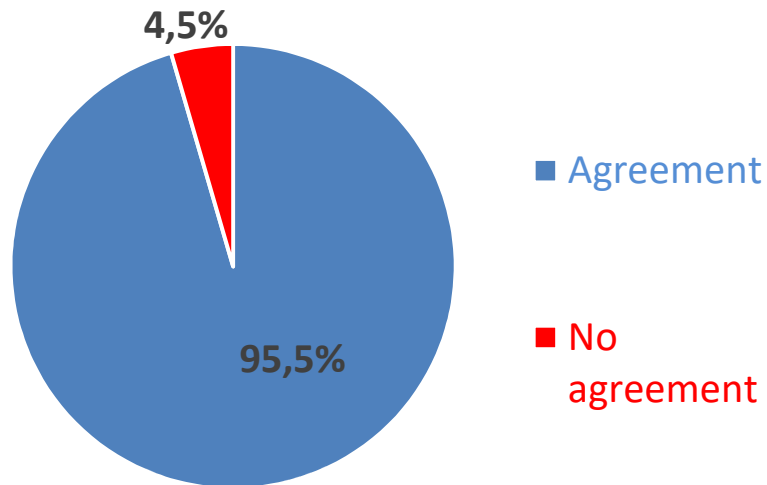
Data

- **literary texts** from the 20th century, retrieved from the Udmurt national corpus (<http://udmcorpus.udman.ru>) (UNC)
 - selected authors: born between 1905 and 1933
 - assumed to represent a **more normative** language variety
- **Social media** subcorpus of the Udmurt language corpora (http://udmurt.web-corpora.net/index_en.html) (SMC)
 - assumed to represent a variety **more influenced by Russian**
- only examples with an overt possessor taken into consideration
- examples analyzed within their context

Frequency of non-agreeing possessives

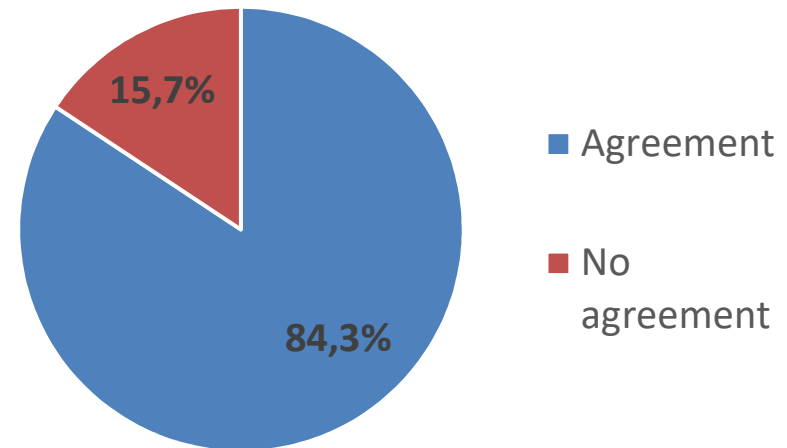
Literary texts

(200 examples)



Social media texts

(331 examples)



(1 example = 1 clause containing one predicative possessive construction)

Literary corpus and Social media corpus: similarities

- human possessors only:

personal pronouns (5), **proper nouns** (6), **common nouns** (7)

(5) ***Mynam** öj val soku 3 g (...) no rouming.* (SMC)
1SG.GEN NEG.PST be.PST then 3 gigabyte and roaming
'At that time, I didn't have 3 gigabytes and roaming.'

(6) ***Saša-len** nylpi vań no kyšno.* (SMC)
Sasha-GEN child be.PRS and wife
'Sasha has a child and a wife.'

(7) ***So** nyl-len appendicit ke...* (UNC)
that girl-GEN appendicitis if
'If that girl has appendicitis....'

Literary corpus and Social media corpus: similarities (cont.)

- whether the possessee is a **RU** (8) or **EN** (9) loanword or not (10) does not seem to play a role:

(8) *Mynam kyće ke pexorka val šusa tod-ko na.*
1SG.GEN some_kind_of yarn be.PST that know-1SG still
'I still know that I had some kind of a yarn.' (SMC)

(9) *Zato so-len ajfon vań, dyr.* (SMC)
but 3SG-GEN iPhone be.PRS maybe
'But he probably has an iPhone.'

(10) *Rud'ik-len syće šulmaškon-jos övöl.* (UNC)
Rudik-GEN such concern-PL be.PRS.NEG
'Rudik doesn't have such concerns.'

Literary corpus and Social media corpus: similarities (cont.)

- 2 common, semantically motivated subtypes of non-agreeing possessive (?) constructions

Type 1: The “*Experiencer* (/*Affectedness*)-type”

- possessor: **experiencer**; psychologically or physiologically affected by the event described by the poss. construction
- possessee: abstract notion:
 - possessor-internal:
 - disease (11), (13), physiological state or process (12)
 - psychological process (13), emotion (14), cognition (15)
 - possessor-external (only in the Social media corpus): event emotionally affecting the possessor (16):
 - *semi-alienable/inalienable, inanimate, abstract, high ability* of being possessed
- *inherent/natural* possession

Type 1: The “*Experiencer* (/Affectedness)-type” (cont.)

(11) *Zamjaťina Rimma-len append'icit övöl kad'.*

Z. R.-GEN appendicitis be.PRS.NEG like

‘It seems that Z. R. doesn’t have appendicitis.’ (UNC)

(12) *Bejbi, mynam vań turbo dźigar (...).*

baby 1SG.GEN be.PRS turbo power

‘Baby, I have a turbo power (...)’ (SMC)

(13) *So-len d'epressija val.* (SMC)

3SG-GEN depression be.PST

‘(S)he had depression.’

Type 1: The “*Experiencer* (/Affectedness)-type” (cont.)

(14) *Okean bydža šud ke mynam luy-sal (...).*

ocean of_the_size_of happiness if 1SG.GEN be-COND

‘If I had a happiness big as the ocean (...)’ (SMC)

(15) *Mynam vań na oskon (...).* (SMC)

1SG.GEN be.PRS still faith

‘I still have faith (...)’

(16) *Mil'am ton-en odig-ez samoj tuzi ar val (...).*

1PL.GEN 2SG-INS one-DET SUPL cool year be.PST

‘We had one of our coolest years with you (...)’ (SMC)

Type 2: The “*Locational-type*”

- possessor: **location**(-like) meaning
 - possessee:
 - inanimate and concrete: artefacts (18)
 - humans with no obligatory reference (19)
 - abstract notions: events (20) (typical in SMC), natural phenomena (21), social organizations (22)
- *alienable; average or low ability* of being possessed
- *associative* possession, or
- *locational* relation

Type 2: The “*Locational-type*” (cont.)

(17) *Mil'am tatyn bol'nica śaryś kritic'eskoj ma'terial vań.*

1PL.GEN here hospital about critic material be.PRS

‘We have here a critic material about the hospital.’ (UNC)

(“Here, at our place...”)

(18) *Kot'kud kyketi udmurt-len (...) st'ena vyl-a-z*

every second Udmurt-GEN wall on-INE-3SG

podobnoj zapis vań! (SMC)

similar post be.PRS

‘Every second Udmurt has a similar post in his newsfeed!’

Type 2: The “Location-type” (cont.)

(19) *Ox, vań mil'am syće ad'ami-os, vań!* (UNC)

oh be.PRS 1PL.GEN such man-PL be.PRS

‘Oh, we do have such people, we do have!’

(“There are such people *among us*”)

(20) *I doryn kot'ku zor-e... mil'am kważ*

and at_home always rain-3SG 1PL.GEN weather

ćeber val... (SMC)

nice be.PST

‘At home, it always rains... We had a nice weather...’

(“*In our environment, ...*”)

Type 2: The “*Locational-type*” (cont.)

(21) *Mil'am* *övöl* *taće* *festival'-jos*. (SMC)

1PL.GEN be.NEG.PRS such festival-PL

‘We don’t have such festivals.’

(“In our area/Here, where we live...”)

(22) *Vań finn-ugor* *kalyk-jos-len* *matriarxat* *val*.

all Finno-Ugric people-PL-GEN matriarchy be.PST

‘All Finno-Ugric peoples had matriarchat.’ (SMC)

Type 2: The “*Locational-type*” (cont.)

→ to be analyzed as locational constructions instead of possessive ones?

- the Udmurt genitive shares some characteristics with locatives (Egedi et al. 2019):
 - diachronically, the genitive case goes back to a locative case (Bartens 2000, Csúcs 2005)
 - Udmurt *belong*-constructions analyzed as locational ones: Egedi et al. (2019)

- Type 1 and 2: taken to be internally (i.e., semantically) motivated instances of lack of possessive agreement

Literary corpus and Social media corpus: differences

- non-agreeing **prototypical possessive** constructions (possessor: human + control, possessee: alienable, concrete object):
 - sample of literary texts: (almost) no examples
 - Social media corpus: several examples
- presumably induced by the influence of Russian

Type 3: Prototypical possession (SMC)

- (23) *Mynam (...) krež* *öj* *val, mynam*
 1SG.GEN [Udmurt instrument] NEG.PST.3SG BE.PST 1SG.GEN
gitara val. (SMC)
 guitar be.PST 'I didn't have any krezh, I had a guitar.'
- (24) *Mynam kyće ke pexorka val šusa*
 1SG.GEN some_kind_of yarn be.PST that
tod-ko na. (SMC)
 know-1SG still 'I still know that I had some yarn.'
- (25) *Kule övöl, miľam tel'efon vań.* (SMC)
 needed be.PRS.NEG 1PL.GEN telephon be.PRS
 'It's not needed, we have a telephone.'

Topicalization overrules?

- prototypical possession with **topicalized possessee** in UNC:

(26) *Nañ mil'am vañ.* (UNC)

bread 1PL.GEN be.PRS

‘Bread, we have.’

- topicalization licences lack of agreement?

(27) *Gaz no, vu no mil'am övöl uk.*

gas also water also 1PL.GEN be.NEG.PRS PCL

‘Neither gas nor water we have.’ (SMC)

Other types of possession in SMC

- inherent possession with kinship terms:

(26) *Saša-len nylpi vań no kyšno.* (SMC)

Sasha-GEN child be.PRS and wife

‘Sasha has a child and a wife.’

- non-locative associative possession:

(27) *Mynam no vań kyk ćeber, viźmo*

1SG.GEN also be.PRS two nice clever

nylašjos eš-jos. (SMC)

girl-PL friend-PL

‘I also have two nice and clever girlfriends.’

Conclusions

- with human possessors only
- origine of lexeme (RU/EN/UDM): no role
- semantically motivated lack of agreement:
 1. **"Experiencer" ("Affectedness")**-type
 2. **Locational**-type → to be analyzed as locational (not as possessive) constructions?
- lack of agreement in literary vs. social media texts:
 - higher % in SMC
 - broader range of constructions in SMC
 - prototypical possessive constructions: mainly in SMC→ interpreted as phenomena induced by Russian influence
- for the future:
 - larger corpus sample, older texts, collecting data from native speakers
 - formal evidence that Type 2 = locational constructions

Thank you for your attention!



Acknowledgements

The research was supported by the following projects of the National Research Innovation and Development Office of Hungary (NKFIH):

125206 *Nominal Structures in Uralic Languages*

125282 *Typological Database of the Volga Area
Finno-Ugric Languages*

129921 *Implications of endangered Uralic
languages for syntactic theory and the history of
Hungarian*

References

- Bartens, R. 2000. *Permiläisten kielten rakenne ja kehitys*. Helsinki: SUS 238.
- Edygarova, Svetlana 2010. *Kategorija possessivnosti v udmurtskom jazyke*. Dissertationes Philologiae Uralicae Universitatis Tartuensis. Doctoral dissertation, University of Tartu.
- Egedi, B., Georgieva, E., Hegedűs, V. & Mus, N. 2019. *The syntax of belonging: cross-linguistic variation within Uralic*. 3rd Syntax of Uralic Languages, Tartu, June 18–19. 2019. http://www.nytud.hu/oszt/elmnyelv/nsul/pres/EGHM_Belong.pdf (Last accessed: 12.02.2021)
- F. Gulyás, Nikolett 2020. Predicative possession in Permian. In: Dalmi, G. & Witkoś, J. & Ceglowski, P. (eds): *Approaches to Predicative Possession. The View from Slavic and Finno-Ugric*. London: Bloomsbury, 186–204.
- Heine, B. 1997. *Possession: cognitive sources, forces and grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UNC (Udmurt national corpus) = Nacional'nyj korpus udmurtskogo jazyka. <http://udmcorpus.udman.ru> (Last accessed: 12.12.2021)
- SMC (Udmurt social media corpus) = http://udmurt.web-corpora.net/udmurt_social_media/search (Last accessed: 07.12.2021)
- Stassen, L. 2009. *Predicative possession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Winkler, Eberhard 2001. Udmurt. Languages of the World 212. München: Lincom Europa.